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United States Department of State

Washington, D. C. 20520

10/18/94

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INFORMATION MEMORANDUM

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DECL: OADR

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TO: The Secretary

THROUGH: P - Mr. Tarnoff  
G - Mr. Wirth

FROM: AF - Prudence Bushnell, Acting

SUBJECT: Status of Rwanda Border Areas

SUMMARY

Concern is mounting regarding the security situation on Rwanda's borders. Militia networks are exercising increasing control in refugee camps in Zaire and Tanzania. Threats against non-governmental organization personnel have forced delays in food distributions and suspension of refugee registration in Zaire. Intimidation of would-be returnees continues. Inadequate food and water supplies are also fueling tensions. There is evidence of preparation by Ex-FAR elements for some kind of military activity. If credible, we would anticipate an early preemptive strike against the ex-FAR by the RPA. AF will host a meeting October 20 to consider possible U.S. contingency responses.

DISCUSSION

In the past month, militia elements have increased their control of security and commodity distribution mechanisms in Rwandan refugee camps in both Zaire and Tanzania. Militia intimidation of would-be returnees continues, as do threats against expatriate workers, who have had to be withdrawn from camps in Zaire for security reasons on a number of occasions. Incidents of violence continue, fueled by militia activity, disinformation campaigns and in some camps, shortages of food and water.

In Goma, the ex-Rwandan army (ex-FAR) has moved many of its troops to locations further west. Troop presence is less noticeable in Tanzania; some ex-FAR troop have moved from Goma down to Bukavu. Indications are mounting that ex-FAR command

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structures are intact and troops are training and/or preparing for some sort of move against Rwanda. While an all-out attack is unlikely, the ex-FAR is believed to have the capability to conduct unconventional military activity, to which the RPA is expected to respond forcefully. A preemptive strike by the RPA cannot be ruled out.

- o Zaire - Goma Camps: Militia activity and security threats in the new camp at Katale have forced two recent evacuations of expatriate staff. UNHCR postponed refugee registration indefinitely due to threats against expatriates. The militia is seeking to control commodity distribution in both Katale and Kibumba camps.
- o Intimidation of refugees also continues, including killings in the camps. A number of refugees (identified as boy scouts) who were helping would-be returnees to board transport were killed in Katale camp in early October.
- o Significant numbers of ex-FAR troops disappeared from their main camp in late September. While some reappeared in Bukavu and Tanzania, the bulk apparently remain just west of Goma. Estimates of overall ex-FAR troop strength remain at 16,000 to 22,000. Many of these retain arms. There is some evidence of training activities taking place.
- o Zaire - Bukavu Camps: Continuing influxes of refugees forced a cutback to half rations of food starting the week of October 2. NGO personnel were concerned about violent reaction from refugees.
- o While no evidence of a mass movement of ex-FAR from Goma was found, NGOs report that troops are visible in the camps; UNHCR and NGOs insist that many of these are armed and willing to use their weapons.
- o Relief workers report a high level of violence, including many killings, in the camps. At least one relief organization was been forced to temporarily withdraw from Bukavu because of threats against its personnel.
- o Tanzania - Ngara and Karagwe Districts: Refugees have continued moving into Tanzania at the rate of over 1,000 per day for the past two months; most recent arrivals are reportedly coming from northern Burundi. UNHCR estimates that under 10% of refugees will return in the next 3 years.

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- o A number of serious security incidents have occurred in Tanzanian camps recently. On September 29, police used tear gas to disperse a crowd of several thousand protesting the arrest of a Rwandan refugee. Some NGOs temporarily pulled out of the camp as a result of that incident.
- o Lack of food in the pipeline has forced WFP to cut food rations in half for several weeks; water rations are also below minimum standards. NGOs fear additional unrest as a result of shortages. Rains are also contributing to the growing emergency situation in the camps.
- o Burundi: According to news sources, officials in Burundi are blaming ex-Rwandan army troops with fueling ethnic hatred in the north of that country. Extremist Hutu gunmen identified by military sources as ex-FAR clashed with the Burundi army October 18 in an encounter that left 20 dead.

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